

**SUMMARY OF THE  
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 21, 1999**

The Proficiency Testing (PT) Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Tuesday, September 21, 1999, at 1 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). The meeting was led by its chair, Ms. Barbara Burmeister of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss selection of a replacement committee member and the Section 2.0 interpretive guidance document.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The minutes of the September 7, 1999 meeting were approved. The status of the Action Items is as follows:

- Comment was received from Mr. Tom Coyner on the definition for "assigned value." Therefore, Ms. Burmeister did not submit definition for "assigned value" to the Program Policy and Structure Committee. This issue will be discussed during today's meeting.
- Ms. Anne Rhyne revised the interpretive guidance document and sent it to committee members for review.
- Ms. Autry arranged hotel accommodations for the face-to-face committee meeting and sent information to the committee members. Ms. Autry will be sending more details closer to the meeting date.
- Ms. Burmeister wrote a proposed agenda for the face-to-face meeting and sent it to committee members for comment.

**FACE-TO-FACE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Ms. Burmeister sent the committee a draft agenda for their face-to-face meeting in Research Triangle Park, NC on October 25-26, 1999. Ms. Autry requested that she be given an hour to discuss Appendix H (Air). No other changes were requested. Ms. Burmeister will revise the agenda and distribute it to the committee.

**REPLACEMENT MEMBER**

Three candidates were considered for the open position on the PT Committee. The committee reviewed their nomination forms and nominated a primary and secondary candidate fill the position. Ms. Burmeister will contact the primary candidate to see if the nomination will be accepted. Because the new member will be replacing a resigning member whose term ends in 2002, the new member's term will end in 2002. The name of the nominee will then be submitted to Dr. Jim Pearson, NELAC chair, for his consideration on appointing the nominee.



## **SECTION 2.0 INTERPRETIVE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT**

This continues discussion primarily from the August 24, 1999, meeting. The Interpretive Guidance Document applies only to the specific case described in Section 2.0, where the Accrediting Authority (AA) may decide to accept PT results from a non-accredited PT Provider for fields of testing for which PT samples are not available through either a National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) Proficiency Testing Oversight Body (PTOB)/Proficiency Test Provider Accreditor (PTPA) (i.e., National Institute of Standards and Technology [NIST]) or an American National Standards Institute/Registrar Accreditation Board (ANSI/RAB)-accredited registrar or equivalent.

Ms. Anne Rhyne revised the Interpretive Guidance Document, per comments from the PT Committee, and distributed it to the committee on September 21, 1999. In summary, the document states that:

“The AA shall document that the Provider meets the requirements of the NELAC standards. The AA’s NELAP auditor shall evaluate the documentation and determine whether it is acceptable. The NELAP auditor should make every effort to maintain consistency when evaluating this documentation maintained by the AA.”

The committee discussed this revised document and approved it with one change. They requested that “NELAP auditor” be changed to “NELAP auditing team.” Ms. Rhyne will make this change and send it to the committee and Ms. Jeanne Mourrain. She will request that the document be discussed in the next meeting of the Accrediting Authorities. Mr. Matt Caruso will draft a response to the comments received from CA and IL based on this revised document.

### **DEFINITION OF “ASSIGNED VALUE”**

The definition (shown below) for “assigned value” was approved on September 7, 1999, by the committee for inclusion in the NELAC combined glossary.

ASSIGNED VALUE: Value attributed to a particular quantity, typically via replicate analyses against Standard or Certified Reference Material, and accepted, sometimes by convention, as having an uncertainty appropriate for a given purpose.

However, comment was received on September 15, 1999, from Mr. Tom Coyner that, while correct, this definition is in opposition to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/NIST usage. He said that the EPA has required that the assigned value of PT samples be the calculated true value of the material corrected for purities, etc. (refer to page 1-1 of the national standards). To accommodate this difference, Mr. Caruso will rewrite the definition so that it includes both interpretations.



## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS RECEIVED**

Ms. Burmeister received additional comments from the following, and distributed them to committee members for review.

- Steve Boggs, California Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP)
- Donovan Porterfield, Los Alamos Department of Energy (DOE)
- Silky Labie, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
- Irene Ronning, Oregon Health Division, Public Health Laboratory

## **EPA/NIST/EMMC ITEMS**

A committee member pointed out that the Environmental Monitoring Management Council (EMMC) was eliminated in the recent reorganization within EPA. Since EMMC no longer exists, this section of the minutes will now be called “EPA/NIST Items.”



**ACTION ITEMS  
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 21, 1999**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>
1.	Ms. Barbara Burmeister will contact the candidate nominated to replace Ms. Darlene Raiford on the committee to see if the nomination is accepted.	
2.	Ms. Burmeister will revise the agenda for the face-to-face meeting and send it to committee members.	
3.	Ms. Anne Rhyne will revise the interpretive guidance document and send it to the PT Committee. She will also send it to Ms. Jeanne Mourrain, requesting that it be added to the agenda for the next Accrediting Authorities meeting.	
4.	Mr. Matt Caruso will draft a response to Illinois ELAP and California ELAP.	
5.	Mr. Caruso will revise the definition for “assigned value.”	



**PARTICIPANTS  
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 21, 1999**

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